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Stier, Ewald

"The sufferings of a people"

[Tokyo?]

[ca. 1913]

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-   6  100 1   Stier, Ewald. ↔
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"The Sufferings of a People."

By Ewald Stier[1].

"Freiligrath in striking verse has called Ireland "the Niobe of nations." This name can with more reason be given to Armenia.

Not any people has endured so much suffering in the course of its history as the Armenian people. It has been subjugated and enslaved by powerful tyrannies: the Persians and the Byzantines, the Arabs and the Turks.

The fact that this people has not even so much as disappeared in the billows of invading barbarism; that it is not assimilated and dissolved in other more powerful nations; that it has conserved itself during twenty centuries intact in the principal mass, and it is even becoming more and more a factor of civilization in the East, proves that it possesses an extraordinary vital force that is inexhaustible, and which no other people has ever possessed. The mass of the people in their native country upon the high Armenian plateau live with difficulty by means of agriculture and handicrafts.

The Armenian emigrants dispersed in Asia and in other corners of the world, living almost exclusively by trade and commerce, constitute only one-sixth part of the nation.

We have before us the most remarkable and the most endowed of Eastern peoples, and the only one that can contribute to the civilization of the East.

The Armenian is laborious, sober, very attached to his family and to his nation. He shows an extraordinary and marvellous zeal for instruction.

According to the latest statistics there are actually in Turkish Armenia 785 schools with 82,000 pupils, whilst all the Turkish schools (subsidized by the State) only number 150 with 17,000 pupils.

As for the Koords, they have no schools at all.

The Armenians possess a dozen superior schools, also maintained by the nation.

Besides that a large number of young Armenians are students in the universities of Europe and Russia. In one Russian capital one can count a thousand Armenian students. With us in Germany they number about 200.

Whether in the Caucasus, in Turkey, or in Persia, the Armenian element occupies a considerable place in all the fields of intellectual activity, in the liberal professions and even in the army.

In Persia a handful of Armenians, having at their head the famous Ephrem, drove out the Shah Mahommed Ali and defended that vast Empire against the assault of reaction.

It is the misfortune of this people that it lives in the neighbourhood of the Koords, a tribe almost entirely savage and nomad.

According to our European conception these intermedial Koodish razzias can be qualified for nothing else except brigandage on a large scale.

The Young Turk régime has changed nothing.

With the inauguration of the Constitution the situation of the Armenians has been aggravated instead of bettered. Under the Hamidian régime the Armenians formed themselves into bands of "fidais," who defended their people against the attacks of the Koords.

With the promulgation of the famous liberties, these bands descended from their mountainous regions and gave up their arms trusting in the promise of the Government.

The Koords, armed and protected by the authorities, continue their crimes. They have already occupied arbitrarily the lands of the Armenians, which the latter had abandoned since the great butcheries.

Under the new régime, as under the former, the Christian is despised: he is the slave in the presence of the Mussulman, who remains the master.

Altogether the Armenian question is a disgrace to the régime of the Young Turks: their attitude towards the Armenians proves that they have not yet assimilated even the most elementary principles of our moral culture.

But this question is a disgrace also for Europe.

[1] The writer of this article is a German publicist who lately travelled for purposes of observation in that portion of Armenia which comes under Turkish domination.

The Armenian problem does not belong to yesterday: it is as old as the relations of Europe with the East.

The Embassy sent by Napoleon 1st to Persia that is more than a century ago reported the facts of the persecutions of the Armenians by the Koords.

In 1862, at the time of the Armenian insurrection at Zeitoon, France for the first time intervened in favour of the Armenian people. Then. . . . the Berlin Congress, the project of reforms of 1880, the Memorandum of 1895. . . . .

Never has any reform been introduced.

At this very hour Armenia is again looking to Europe.

Shall the negotiations commenced between the Powers give the desired result?

The Armenians are making the greatest efforts for attaining this end.

For several months the delegate of the Catholicos of Edgemiatsin, Paul Nubar Pasha, the son of the celebrated Minister of Egypt, has worked in Europe.

After having obtained some firm declarations from the Governments of France and England, he was received on the 3rd of August by the Under Secretary of State of the German Foreign Minister.

The efforts of Nubar Pasha are supported by the Armenian Committees of Paris, London, Geneva, Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburgh.

It is Germany which shall have to pronounce the decisive word.

She does not wish to institute a European governor in Armenia, since that will be creating a sort of State under Russian influence. She asks to name an Ottoman subject but a Christian as governor of the Armenian provinces and to create thus a régime analogous to that of Lebanon.

Then, can this year bring deliverance to an intelligent and suffering people and pull it out at last from the talons of its executioners?"

Let me add that the Amercian educational institutions in Armenia, Asia Minor and Constantinople are filled with Armenian students. In St. Paul's College and Academy at Tarsus, the Armenian students number 195, the Moslems 3. The Tarsus College and Academy are fair samples of the other American institutions as regards the number of Armenian and Moslem students receiving instruction.

Besides these, a number of Armenian young men are found in the Universities of the United States.

In Adana, Armenian national enterprise has put up within four years a larger and better school in place of the former national school which the Turk's Constitutional Government burned down to the ground in 1909 and in which two thousand famished and wounded Armenian women and children refugees were roasted alive by the Agents and soldiers of the Central Government at Constantinople.

When the Russian Constitution comes it will have to be remembered that it was an Armenian who framed it and laid the foundation for that justice which will give the Russian people freedom.

But "The Equilibrium of Europe" requires that one of the most intelligent, gifted and capable of races shall be ground down to the earth under the heel of a race of savage destroyers.

The domination of the descendents of the robber Ertoghoul has been kept up by "The Powers" over Christian peoples on account of the strategic position of Constantinople.

The Koords are the remnant of the ancient Assyrians: the influence of Islam has moulded them into a tribe of wild wolves.

Europe has done nothing for Armenia, but Armenia, by the stubborn resistance of her sons to Moslem barbarism, has rendered incalculable service to Europe.

There is no one Christian Church that has singly rendered that degree of service to Christianity and Civilization as the Church of Armenia. Through the ages she has stood a bulwark for Christianity in the East. But Christianity and Civilization have required that the Armenians should be destroyed on the soil of Armenia by the savage and barbarous Moslem Turk.

DIANA AGABEG APCAR.

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